Joint ventures by the Railways

3441. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any move to initiate joint ventures by the Railway with private parties;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed joint ventures;

(c) whether the railways have taken up works, like producing power from private parties;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the amount sanctioned for this purpose; and

(e) whether the World Bank conditions are insisting for privatisation of Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Joint Venture Company named Pipavav Rail Corporation Limited (PRCL) has been formed with 50:50 equity participation between Ministry of Railways and Gujarat Pipavav Port Limited in the private sector to execute Gauge Conversion of Surendranagar — Rajula city MG line and a new line extension from Rajula city to Pipavav port for providing rail connectivity to the port.

A proposal is under consideration for execution of Gandhidham —Palanpur Gauge Conversion project through joint venture participation with Government of Gujarat, Kandla Port Trust and Gujarat Adani Port Limited.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No, Sir.

Rakesh Mohan Committee of the Railways

3442. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which the Rakesh Mohan Committee submitted its report to Government;

(b) the major recommendations made by the Committee;

(c) whether the Railway Board have made any in-depth study of the Committee's Report and their implications, and if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(d) the action contemplated by Government for implementation of the major recommendations particularly those relating to corporatisation of the Indian Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (d) The Railway Expert Group headed by Dr. Rakesh Mohan has submitted its report on 7/8/2001. The Report contained the following Major Recommendations:

1. Institutional separation of roles into policy, regulatory and management functions. This will mean:

i. Policy makers are limited for setting policy (and paying for what they ask for). The Government of India will be in charged of setting policy direction.

ii. Provide operational autonomy and insulate Indian Railways by corporatising it into "Indian Railways Corporation" (IRC). It would be governed by a reconstituted Indian Railways Executive Board.

iii. Set up an Indian Rail Regulatory Authority to regulate IRC's activities as a monopoly supplier of rail services particularly related to tariff setting.

2. *Ex ante* acceptance and commitment by the Government and Indian Railways that Indian Railways will operate on commercial lines are the necessary conditions for the reorganisation to be successful a exercise. Non-commercial activities mandated by the Government will be clearly identified and Indian Railways appropriately compensated for such activities.

3. In view of financial crisis Indian Railways to pursue the strategic High Growth pattern for financial recovery.

4. Exemption from taxation—excise, sales tax etc. for the period of transition, say 5—7 years.

5. Set up a Social Safety net to take care of surplus labour.

6. Restructuring of financial accounts of Indian Railways in accordance with the Companies Act, 1956.

7. Spinning off non-core activities.

8. Rebalancing of tariffs to eliminate cross subsidisation.

A Committee of senior officers of Railway Board has been constituted to study various recommendations made in the Report. The Committee is yet to submit its Report. Further action will be initiated on receipt of the report of this Committee.

Punctuality of trains

3443. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that punctuality performance of trains has been declining constantly, over the last few years;

(b) if so, the details of the actual punctuality performance during the last three years, year-wise and the specific reasons identified for the reported downward trend in different Railway Zones; and

(c) the steps taken to achieve better punctuality to adhere to the railway time-table?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) A statement is enclosed (*See* below)

(c) The following steps are being taken to improve the punctuality performance of trains:

1. Intensive, round the clock monitoring of trains at all the three levels *viz.* Divisional, Zonal Head Quarters and Railway Board.
2. Punctuality drives are being conducted by nominating officials to monitor trains.
3. Running of trains at maximum permissible speed subject to observance of safety limits and speed restriction.
4. Improvement in standard of maintenance to reduce equipment failures.
5. Counselling and motivating staff to ensure punctual running.
6. Liaison with State Government to tackle the Law and Order problems and miscreant activities.